Tombless, with no remembrance over them:
Either our history shall, with full mouth,
Speak freely of our acts; or else our grave,
Like Turkish mute, shall have a tongueless mouth,
Not worshiped with a paper epitaph \

a — with a PAPER epitaph.] This is the reading of the quartos, adopted by Mr. Malone. Mr. Steevens reads with the folio—waxen.

Either a *waxen* or a *paper* epitaph is an epitaph easily obliterated or destroyed: one which can confer no lasting honour on the dead.

To the ancient practice of writing on *waxen* tablets Shakspeare again alludes in the first scene of Timon of Athens :

«---------but moves itself
" In a wide sea of *wax*."

See notes on this passage.

Thus also, in G. Whetstone's Garden of Unthriftiness. 1576:

" In *waxe*, say I, men easily grave their will;
" In marble stone the worke with paine is wonne :
" But perfect once, the print remaineth still,
« When *waxen* seales by every browse are donne."

STEVENS.

The second reading is more unintelligible, to me at least, than the other: a grave not *dignified* with the slightest memorial.

JOHNSON.

I think this passage has been misunderstood. Henry says, " he will *either* rule with full dominion in France, *or* die in the attempt, and lay his bones in a paltry urn, without a tomb, or any remembrance over him." With a view to the alternative that he has just stated, he adds, by way of apposition and illustration, " either the English Chronicles shall speak, *trumpet-tongued*, to the world, of my victories in France, or, being defeated there, my death shall scarcely be *mentioned in history ;* shall not be *honoured* by the best epitaph a prince can have, the *written* account of his achievements."—A *paper* epitaph, therefore, or, in other words, an historical eulogy, instead of a token of respect, is mentioned by Henry as the most honourable memorial; and Dr. Johnson's objection founded on the incongruity of saying that his grave should not be *dignified* by the *slightest* memorial, falls to the ground.

Dryden has a similar expression in the dedication of his poem entitled Eleonora to the Earl of Abingdon : " Be pleased to ac-

cept of these my unworthy labours ; this *paper monument*."

The misrepresentation, I conceive, arose from understanding" a figurative expression literally, and supposing that a paper emtapfo

an epitaph written on a paper, to be *affixed to a tomb*.